

SOME IRISH NATURALISTS<sup>1</sup>—From the age of six when his grandfather, Robert Patterson, first showed him the Adder's-tongue, *Ophioglossum*, Robert Lloyd Praeger has continued an absorbing interest in natural history, particularly in botany and zoology. Now in his eighty-sixth year he has brought together an album of some 320 Irish naturalists, dating from the seventh century. Praeger himself has "met and known every outstanding naturalist working in Ireland; whether on rocks, animals, plants, insects, fishes or other branches of [natural history]." He became a member of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club at the age of eleven, and a judge of fern exhibits at the Temple Show at seventeen. After a youth spent in and near Belfast, he went to Dublin in 1893 and remained with the National Library until his retirement in 1923. In 1901 he published *Irish Topographical Botany* and later *The Botanist in Ireland*. He edited the *Irish Naturalist* from its beginning in 1892 throughout its thirty-three years of existence. But it is for his monographic work on the genera *Sedum* and *Sempervivum* that Praeger is best known in America.

*Some Irish Naturalists* consists of three chief parts, viz., "Some Personal Contacts," telling of Praeger's more intimate scientific associations; "Brief Biographical Notices," a roster making up the bulk of the book; and "Societies, Institutions, Team-work," a summary of the activities of twenty-four organizations, field surveys, and the like. Among the accounts of dozens of botanists in the roster may be found brief notes on Thomas Antisell, C. C. Babington, John Ball, R. M. Barrington, Nathaniel Colgan, Thomas Coulter, R. O. Cunningham, H. H. Dixon, G. C. Druce, Thomas Drummond, John Ellis,—to cull from the first five letters of the alphabet only! It is patent, then, that Praeger's book is a highly useful reference work. It is furthermore a delight to browse leisurely through its pages.

We lift one anecdote from Praeger's book for this review: Rev. William Spotswood Green, 1847–1919, aside from serving as rector of a "quiet country parish" and being an invertebrate zoologist of note, was the first to attain the summit of the highest of the New Zealand Alps, Mount Cook, ele. 12,349 feet, in 1881. Later Green surveyed for the Canadian Government in the Rockies of British Columbia and wrote *Among the Selkirk Glaciers* (1890). Praeger says "he was a man for whose energy, enterprise, courage and scientific imagination I had a sincere admiration; and I saw him at his best, at sea under difficult circumstances, during oceanic dredging and attempts to land on tempestuous Rockall. He was resourceful, and daring almost to rashness, as witness his adventures on Mount Cook in New Zealand; and his whimsical humour never forsook him. I recall him staggering down the companion ladder of the little 'Flying Falcon' in a full gale, and surveying the dishevelled cabin and his deep-sea dredging colleagues in a state of collapse. A sudden storm had come up; Green had spent the night with the captain on the bridge, in great pain on account of a heavy fall; and now, surveying the scene in the grey dawn, his only comment was: 'I have always thought that if the hippopotamus had been shown his photograph before he was created, he would have been able to suggest some important improvements.' That was Green all over."—JOSEPH EWAN, Tulane University.

<sup>1</sup> *Some Irish Naturalists. A Biographical Note-book.* By R. Lloyd Praeger, D.Sc., Sc.D., M.R.I.A. with 60 portraits. Dundalk, W. Tempest, Dundalgan Press, pp. 208. 18 plates, frontispiece. 1949. 15s.

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